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HOW FREE? An Editorial Note

Any listing of the countries of the "free western world" would include West Germany. How free is it really today in West Germany?

As this issue of GERMAN REPORT goes to press, the news comes in that the police in various parts of West Germany have rounded up dozens of trade unionists who were allegedly publishing illegal newspapers for the banned Communist Party. Full details of the arrests have not yet come in, but some of the men arrested are known to be veterans of the fight against nazism, men who spent years in prisons and concentration camps during the Hitler period. The police who arrested them were the very same men who arrested them on Hitler's orders 20 or 25 years ago.

Perhaps the men arrested were making bombs, and preparing for the forcible overthrow of the government? Even the West German Government does not make this suggestion. Since the Communist Party was banned in West Germany by court order in August 1956, they, and hundreds of others like them, have been printing and distributing underground newspapers, which published such "subversive" material as the suggestion that it would be a good thing for Germany and for the world if both German states disarmed by mutual agreement. It is important to stress that the material published in these underground newspapers would be perfectly legal in such countries as Britain, Holland, or Denmark, or even in the United States.

Not only Communists have been exposed to arbitrary police action in West Germany: in the past four years dozens of non-Communists active in the peace movement have been dragged through the courts on flimsy charges that because they proposed peace steps also sponsored by Communists, they were therefore "crypto-Communists". Many have been sentenced to long prison terms, and hundreds more have been held for months without trial, black-listed in their jobs, and hounded in other ways.

The police who make the arrests, the public prosecutors who conduct the investigations, and the judges who pass sentence are in very many cases the very same people who did the same job for Hitler. At least 250 former Gestapo officials holding key posts in the West German police forces, particularly in branches dealing with "political offences", and about 1200 West German judges and public prosecutors worked in the same capacity in Hitler's "Special Courts" and military courts.

Liberal circles in West Germany too are worried about the growing influence of old unreconstructed nazis in the police force: the cartoon below, reproduced from the West German daily newspaper "Frankfurter Rundschau" is an example.

There is, of course, freedom in West Germany: a free hand for the old Gestapo men.

(Note: Gerhard Schröder, former nazi storm trooper, is Minister of the Interior in West Germany. The letters "SD" on the cap stand for "Sicherheitsdienst", the nazi security service.)

(Cartoon from "Frankfurter Rundschau", West Germany)

MORE LIGHT ON HEUSINGER

NATO Chairman Ordered Mass Shootings

Research into nazi archives is bringing to light more details of the career of Adolf Heusinger, top West German general, who will take over the post of Chairman of the NATO Military Committee in Washington in March 1961.

From 1940 to 1944, General Heusinger was chief of the operations department on Hitler's General Staff, and it was a matter of public knowledge that in this capacity he had been mainly responsible for drafting the plans for "Operation Sea-Lion", the invasion of Britain which did not come off, and for "Operation Barbarossa", the invasion of the Soviet Union.

New documents, recently discovered, show that Heusinger personally signed orders for the murder of Soviet partisans. Here are some samples from the files:

On August 28th, a detachment of Byelorussian partisans destroyed the important German-occupied railway station of Slavnoye near Orsha. On hearing the news, General Heusinger immediately telegraphed the nazi commander of this area:

"The Fuehrer demands immediate reprisal for attack on Slavnoye, including sharpest terror measures. Planned measures must be reported".

On August 30th the commander reported that he intended to shoot 100 relatives of the partisans concerned. Heusinger telegraphed back laconically: "Agree to proposed measures."

The massacre was duly carried out. One of the villagers who survived, Pavel Stepanovitch Korolkov, reported later:

"We were all driven to the market place. About 10 in the evening, seven lorries loaded with women, children and old people arrived. The German Commandant made a speech stating that these people were being executed as a reprisal for the partisan attack on Slavnoye. A big ditch was dug in the cemetery, the people were thrown off the lorries and shot with machine guns. We were forced to look into the ditch. Many of the victims were still moving."

Early in December 1942 a sector commander of the Wehrmacht asked Heusinger for specific instructions on what to do with men who deserted from the partisans to the Germans. Here is the text of Heusinger's reply:

"December 7th 1942. To the Chief of General Staff of Army Group Centre, Herr Lieutenant General Woehler. Secret. Subject: Bandit deserters. The treatment of deserters is laid down in the Supreme Command Instructions for fighting bandits in the east, paragraph 11, 84, and 87. Chief of Operations Department of Army General Staff. Signed Heusinger."

Paragraph 84 of the Command Instructions, to which Heusinger refers in this telegram, reads as follows:

"Captured bandits are... to be hanged or shot. Deserters should be treated as prisoners. As a rule prisoners, after short questioning, are to be shot on the spot. Only in exceptional cases are individual suitable prisoners and deserters to be handed over for questioning and later treatment to the Military Police or the police. Every unit commander is responsible for seeing to it that captured bandits and civilians caught in active fighting (including women) are shot, or better hanged."

The same Heusinger who issued these instructions has now been appointed Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, the key military post in the entire NATO organisation.

Jail Threat For Printing the News

The editor of a West Berlin newspaper may be sent to prison for up to five years for publishing news items freely published in all other parts of the world, in a trial now pending in the West Berlin courts.

The editor, Albert Grohmann, publishes the newspaper "Die Wahrheit" in West Berlin. It is the organ of the Socialist Unity Party, which is a legal party in West Berlin, as distinct from West Germany, where its brother party, the Communist Party of Germany, is banned.

The charges against Herr Grohmann are that he published, without comment, a joint declaration issued in October 1960 by the Governments of the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic, warning of the dangers of West German rearmament; and the "Moscow Declaration of the Communist Parties" issued on December 6th 1960.

Both documents, or long extracts therefrom, were published in such newspapers as "The Times" of London, "The New York Times", and in many West Berlin newspapers. No legal action is being taken against the other West Berlin newspapers which published these news items.

Action is being taken by the West Berlin authorities under Decree 501, promulgated in 1950 by the British, American and French Commandants in West Berlin. This decree, ostensibly aimed against neo-nazi literature, makes it an offence to "make denigratory remarks about the western occupation powers". The news item which form the basis for the legal charge pointed out that American policy had been mainly responsible for the resurgence of West German militarism.

Mob Shouts "Hang Him"

A lynch mob shouting "Hang him" smashed windows of a hall in Marburg, West German university town, when Dr Johannes Dieckmann, Chairman of the People's Chamber of the GDR, addressed a meeting of students there on January 13th. Dr Dieckmann was speaking on the invitation of the local branch of the Liberal Students' Association.

Local police prevented any personal injury being done to Dr Dieckmann, but otherwise made no attempt to restrain the mob, which burned a GDR flag in best storm trooper tradition. For days before the meeting West German Government spokesmen and pro-Government newspapers had been organising the demonstration.

In his speech, Dr Dieckmann urged the neutralisation of both German states, and attempts to reach an understanding by negotiation. He invited West German leaders to address meetings in the German Democratic Republic on an exchange basis, and promised them that they would not be exposed to mob violence in Democratic Germany.

1933 AND ALL THAT

The Story of a West German Schoolbook

This is the story of one of the history books used today in West German schools, a book from which hundreds of thousands of West German boys and girls are supposed to learn the facts about recent history.

The story starts nearly seven years ago. On May 28th 1954, GERMAN REPORT published a short analysis of the history book "Lebendige Vergangenheit" (The Living Past) Volume V, a history book for secondary schools written by Fritz Simonsen, published in 1953 by Ernst Klett Verlag, Stuttgart. The analysis showed that the book crudely distorted recent history, played down nazi crimes, and made much of alleged allied crimes in the course of the Second World War.

The criticisms of the book published in GERMAN REPORT and other papers aroused the interest of historians in various countries. One of these historians, Dr W. E. Mosse, of the Department of History of Glasgow University, made a thorough-going analysis of the 1956 edition of the West German schoolbook, and reached the conclusion that use of this history book "must inevitably warp the minds of schoolchildren unfortunate enough to be brought up in the spirit of Dr Simonsen."

The Glasgow analysis of the West German schoolbook was printed (in English) in the 1959/1960 volume of the West German annual "Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichtsunterricht", Albert Limbach Verlag, Brunswick. The editors of the annual appended the note: "The editors wish to point out that a complete revision of 'Lebendige Vergangenheit' Volume V has been published in the meantime, and this should even satisfy our foreign colleague."

Here are the main points made by Dr Mosse in his analysis of the 1956 edition, together with the changes (if any) in the 1960 edition. Dr Mosse stated (all quotations from Dr Mosse's report are given in italics):

'Contemporary history' is unfortunately but inevitably the field of political passions. This fact is clearly demonstrated by the present work. Down to 1914 — in spite of occasional lapses — a fair degree of objectivity is, on the whole, maintained. After that date the treatment of events becomes increasingly emotional, partial and prejudiced ...

The spirit pervading the second part of the book can be illustrated by some details ... There is a repeated one-sidedness in the judgments passed openly or by implication on the 'misdeeds' of Germany and her enemies ... Whilst there is not even a mention of German deeds like the destruction of Rotterdam by aerial bombardment, or the bombardment of Warsaw and Belgrade, the following is the author's comment on the allied bombardments of German cities: "Even worse was the 'total war' against the civilian population. The attacks on Luebeck, Nuremberg, Hildesheim, Dresden and many other places meant that irreplaceable works of art were lost to humanity for ever. One big city after another was reduced to rubble. The peasant behind the plough and the children on the playgrounds were aimed at and killed by the planes' guns."

(Revised 1960 edition: The German bombing of cities such as Rotterdam and Belgrade still finds no place in the revised edition. With regard to Warsaw there has been a change. The 1956 edition stated: "After Warsaw had refused to capitulate, the bombing squadrons attacked. On September 27th the wrecked city surrendered." The 1960 edition added the words "after immense sacrifices amongst the population" to the last sentence.)

The 1956 edition devoted over half a page to a dramatic account of the bombing of German cities, including the passage quoted by Dr Mosse. The 1960 edition does just the same, but drops the sentence about "the peasant behind the plough and the children on the playgrounds".)

Whilst passing over in silence German atrocities in Poland and the Ukraine, the author includes a long extract from an East Prussian newspaper about Russian atrocities. The opening paragraph is sufficient to characterise the extract: "When the Russian Army reached German soil, it committed atrocities which rendered the population speechless ..."

(Revised 1960 edition: The one sentence quoted by Dr Mosse has been dropped in the new edition. The rest of the account of alleged allied atrocities is printed unchanged. The 1960 edition adds one sentence on the fate of the Poles in occupied Poland: "Here the Poles were destined to live a culture-less life as worker-slaves of the Reich.)

The following is the comment on the activities of Russian partisans "In addition there were the activities of the partisans, who according to Russian accounts have the lives of 300,000 German soldiers on their consciences".

(Revised 1960 edition: This sentence has been amended. It now reads "... partisans, who according to Russian accounts killed 300,000 Germans.")

Whilst there is not one word of sympathy for the victims of National Socialism, displaced persons or deportees, there is the following description of the expulsions of Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary: "These unhappy expellees were confronted with an inhuman fate ... Unnumbered thousands died as the result of their deprivations and the cruelty of their persecutors ..."

(Revised 1960 edition: "The expulsions were carried out ruthlessly. About nine million refugees ... found salvation in the western occupation zones. Germandom outside the old Reich frontiers was largely destroyed. The victorious powers now used the same methods which Hitler's governors had carried out in their rule of force in the occupied countries: innocents were again the pitiful victims of ruthless power politics.")

It might be noted that the strongest condemnation of Nazi atrocities is the single use of the word misdeed (Untat), that the abuse of racial theories was an error (Irrtum) and that in order to avoid having to express a moral judgment on Nazi crimes the author no less than three times says that these actions earned the hatred of the outside world.

(Revised 1960 edition: Old version: "One of the greatest errors of National Socialism was the misuse of the racial idea". 1960 version: "One of the worst crimes of National Socialism was the misuse of the racial idea."

Old version: "With unquenchable hatred, Hitler persecuted the Jews". 1960 version: "With unquenchable hatred Hitler persecuted the Jews, whom he called the enemies of mankind and of all culture".

Old version: "The leadership of the National Socialist Party used this as

(cont. on next page)

(cont. from page 19)

an excuse for an unworthy persecution of the Jews". 1960 version: "The leadership of the National Socialist Party used this as an excuse for a widespread persecution of the Jews".

At the end of a short paragraph on the Jewish question, the old edition stated: "This earned for the German people the hatred and contempt of the whole civilised world". The edition omits this sentence, but later adds a total of seven lines recording that Hitler killed between 4½ and 6 million Jews. The book claims that the German people did not know about the murders.)

For the author's ambiguous attitude towards National Socialism, three examples must suffice. The first comes from the account of how Hitler got rid of seven million unemployed ...

(Revised 1960 edition: The enthusiastic account of Hitler's actions to solve the unemployment problem is slightly altered, admitting that unemployment dropped in other countries during the same period.)

The second is from the account of the Nazi Putsch in Austria in 1934, from which the murder of Dollfuss is deliberately omitted ...

(Revised 1960 edition: The murder of Dollfuß is recorded.)

This may be compared with the deliberately misleading account of the outcome of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial: "In Nuremberg the victors — in association with the Russians — conducted trials lasting years against leading men of the National Socialist Party, the state and the armed forces. Many death sentences were passed, on Goering and Ribbentrop amongst others."

(Revised 1960 edition: "In Nuremberg the victors — in association with the Soviet Union — conducted trials against leading National Socialists, also against leading government officials, officers, scientists and economic leaders. Several death penalties and long prison sentences were imposed.")

The author's treatment of the Soviet system is one-sided and entirely negative. It should be compared with his persistent attempts to bring out the positive aspects of the National Socialist system.

The list could be extended, but sufficient has been said to characterise the general spirit pervading the second part of the work ... Whatever the merits of the first part (of the book) with regard to impartiality, the second must inevitably warp the minds of schoolchildren unfortunate enough to be brought up in the spirit of Dr Simonsen.

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GERMAN REPORT adds:

So much for the criticisms made by Dr Mosse of Glasgow, and the corrections made by Dr Fritz Simonsen. The corrections made are pitifully inadequate, and scarcely change the tenor of the history book: but corrections have in fact been made, as a result of protest from abroad. Even before Dr Mosse made his analysis of the book, some of the very worst pro-nazi passages had been excised, as a result of criticism in GERMAN REPORT and elsewhere. To give just one example: the 1953 edition, referring to the Nuremberg trials, stated: "The German people have a critical attitude towards these trials, since they are convinced that many of the sentences were unjust, owing to the fact that the prosecutors and judges were still under the influence of hate propaganda, that the prosecution witnesses were very unreliable, that the accused were tortured to get confessions, and that obstacles were put in the way of the defence." This typical neo-nazi statement was cut out of later editions.

In one of its next issues, GERMAN REPORT will publish a full comparison of the way which the nazi era and the Second World War are treated in the schoolbooks of West Germany and the schoolbooks of the German Democratic Republic.

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We shall be pleased to mail sample copies of the paper to him or her.

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Social Democrats Bid for Nationalist Vote

The West German Social Democratic Party opened a bid for nationalist votes in the forthcoming general elections on January 23rd by announcing that it favoured the return of "Sudeten Germans" to the frontier areas of Czechoslovakia.

The "Sudeten Germans", the German minority in pre-war Czechoslovakia, were re-settled in Germany after the war under the terms of the Potsdam Agreement. Since then extreme nationalist spokesmen of this group have been calling for a new partitioning of Czechoslovakia and their return to their former homes: this would entail the expulsion of the present Czech inhabitants.

The Social Democratic leadership came out with its vote-catching appeal to expansionist sentiment after a conference in late January with Hans Christoph Seebohm, Adenauer's Minister of Transport and Chairman of the Sudeten German Committee.

Commenting on the Social Democratic decision, the West German "Stuttgarter Zeitung" stated on January 25th: "Good sense has been sacrificed to political tactics. The Social Democrats know that the return of expelled Sudeten Germans to their former homes is utopian. To demand this, even in election year, borders on demagogy."

GDR Help for Algeria

Trade union leaders from Democratic Germany turned over a shipment of goods worth 500,000 marks (over £40,000) to representatives of the Algerian trade unions and the Red Crescent society in Tunis in late January. The shipment was made up of medicines, clothing, beds and tools, and was paid for with contributions from the workers of the GDR.

Members of the Red Crescent organisation, the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA) and Mehri Abd El Hamid, Minister for Social Welfare and Culture in the Provisional Algerian Government, welcomed the GDR group and thanked the people of Democratic Germany for their solidarity and help.

UAR Decorates Rau

Deputy Premier Heinrich Rau of the GDR received the Grand Cordon of the Order of the United Arab Republic on January 26th from President Gamal Nasser. The decoration was granted in connection with negotiations in Cairo on developing economic relations between the two countries.

You Ask — We Answer

WHAT ABOUT NAZIS IN DEMOCRATIC GERMANY?

"What is the real situation with regard to the ex-nazis in East Germany? The Canadian edition of 'UAW Solidarity', the international journal of the United Automobile Workers of America, printed an article on December 20th stating: "The East German Government ... had installed in office a whole book full of ex-Nazis." Could you please comment."

J. P., Vancouver, Canada

This is an old story, which has often been commented on in GERMAN REPORT in the past. We have written to the journal "UAW Solidarity", and the full text of our letter is printed below. It will be interesting to see if this comment is published by the American union journal. Here is the letter:

Dear Sir,

My attention has been drawn to an article by George Burt in the Canadian edition of your newspaper dated December 20th 1960 under the heading "Whose Ex-Nazis?" As a journalist who has worked in Germany since 1947, first as Berlin correspondent for Reuters News Agency and later in the German Democratic Republic, I should like to comment on his article, especially since I have studied the question of ex-nazis very carefully.

Mr Burt suggest that there are as many prominent ex-nazis in leading positions in East Germany as in West Germany. He names three such people and implies that there are many more. What are the facts?

Allow me to compare the situation in particularly sensitive sections of the administration of the two German states:

The Cabinet

The Cabinet of the GDR (East Germany) has 23 members. 5 of them fought fascism in Spain in the International Brigade; 7 spent long terms in Nazi prisons and concentration camps; 2 did underground work inside Germany; 4 had to emigrate and work against Hitler from abroad.

The West German Cabinet (18 men) includes 5 Hitler officers, 1 storm trooper, 3 men who made money out of Hitler's war as successful industrialists. Two or three ministers had minor differences with the nazis, but none have a clear anti-nazi resistance record.

The Armed Forces

The People's Army of the GDR is exclusively commanded by men with anti-Hitler records. Most of the senior officers fought in the International Brigade in Spain or in the resistance movements in Slovakia, France, Yugoslavia, Greece and other countries. Not a single senior officer served as officer in the nazi Wehrmacht, though a few junior officers were nazi conscripts.

The West German Army, Navy and Air Force are commanded by approximately 150 generals and admirals — every single one of whom was a general, admiral or other top officer in the nazi Wehrmacht. Some served post-war sentences for their part in nazi war crimes, like top general Friedrich Foertsch. There is not a single officer with an anti-nazi record.

The Police

All key posts in the People's Police Force of the GDR are held by anti-fascists. 500 leading officers hold the "Resistance Fighter's Medal" for their part in the fight against Hitler. No former nazi police officers are employed.

The West German Police Force is riddled with former Gestapo and SS officers; they head the detective police departments in very many cities. Kurt Obstfelder, for example, a convicted war criminal, is police chief of Hanover, and Walter Schueler, police commissar of Ansbach, was officer of a nazi liquidation squad in Poland. At least 250 similar cases have already been discovered. A few anti-fascists are still employed by the police in some provinces of West Germany.

The Courts

All old nazi judges and prosecutors were removed in East Germany right after the war; they have never been permitted to return.

In West Germany, about 1100 judges and prosecutors served on Hitler's Special Political Courts and Military Courts. Many of them once condemned people to death for listening to a broadcast from London, helping a British POW or a Jewish child escape death, or saying that the nazis might lose the war.

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In his article Mr Burt named three ex-nazis who held positions in the GDR. The men he named were indeed in the Nazi Party, but all three joined the Free Germany Committee in the Soviet Union in 1943 and volunteered to do dangerous front-line work, and thus helped to defeat Hitler. Luitpold Steidle, one of the men named by Mr Burt, today a city mayor in the GDR, helped found the Free Germany organisation and was sentenced to death in absentia by a nazi court for his front-line work.

Let me sum up: there are former nazis and men and women with anti-nazi records in both German states. The difference is that in the German Democratic Republic anti-nazis run things, and an ex-nazi in public life is the rare exception; in West Germany the former nazis are back in power, and a man with an anti-nazi record is a rarity.

I would be happy to provide you with names and documentary evidence for all statements made in this letter. I trust that in the interests of truth your newspaper will find space for this correction.

John Peet

"The book 'The Case Against Adolf Eichmann' by Henry Zeiger (Signet Books, New York, 1960), states that SS General Heinrich Mueller, chief of the Gestapo, "seems to have acquired some sort of semi-official position in the East German Government". Can you tell me if there is any truth in this allegation?"

M. B., Greenock, Scotland

SS General Mueller was last seen in Hitler's bunker in Berlin on April 29th 1945, a few days before the end of the war. Since then his whereabouts have been unknown, and he is generally believed to be dead. He is certainly not in the GDR, in a semi-official position or in any other capacity.

KEEN EATER'S GUIDE TO SOCIALIST GROCERIES

By Allen Mann

Going shopping in the GDR has often in the past involved many problems. Quite a few of them have disappeared by now – but not all of them. Here is a record of a visit in January 1961 to a big "HO" food store in central East Berlin showing what things are like today. "HO" means Handelsorganisation (Trade Organisation), the rather sombre name borne by the network of nationally-owned shops which handles about one third of all retail trade. A further third is done by consumer cooperatives, and the remainder by private shops. Prices are the same in all forms of shops.

On entering the busy store I followed instructions and took a wire basket. Like more and more shops in the GDR, even in the smallest villages, self-service had been introduced here. A few people still prefer to be waited on personally, but most like the new system better, if only because there is usually only one queue to wait on (at the cashiers) and this moves quickly. Under the old system, it was often necessary to wait at several different counters while all sorts of foods were discussed, weighed, sliced or examined.

Most of the foods are displayed on stands spaced through the shop. The first two stands I visited were reserved for wines – red, white and dessert wines, some from the skimpy stretch of vineyards on the Elbe in the GDR but mostly imported from Hungary, Bulgaria, Roumania and the Soviet Union. There was also one variety from Italy. A sparkling wine of domestic production was there, but I have not seen the very fine (but rather expensive) Soviet champagnes for several months.

A nearby stand displayed spirits – schnapps, vodka, cherry brandy, crème de menthe and other specialties. Then there were the beers – including a strong bock beer, a Pilsener and "German porter".

Facing these shelves as if in protest were stands reserved for teetotalers, vegetarians and health dieters. There was a wide variety of fruit and vegetable juices, herb teas of all kinds, special foods for diabetics and the nearest local equivalent to breakfast cereals, which are otherwise not well known here. (One American I know here calls the local corn flakes "chipped cardboard", and they certainly don't look "crackle and pop".) Here and in almost every other corner of the shop were tins of excellent Bulgarian tomato juice, thousands of them; a tangible proof that there had been a very good tomato crop in Bulgaria last summer (up until about two years ago hardly anyone in the GDR even knew what tomato juice was, so this was really a step forward.)

My next stop was at the deep-freeze department. The refrigerated sales bins were packed quite full of nice little cardboard packages; this is one field where there has been a very marked improvement in the past few months alone.

Frozen vegetables, ready for cooking, included Roumanian green peas, Bulgarian string beans and red peppers, a mixture of carrots, peas and asparagus from Hungary as well as home-grown cauliflower, carrots, Brussels sprouts, spinach, tomato salad, red cabbage, green cabbage, savoy cabbage and potato soup with the ever-popular Bockwurst sausages.

As for the frozen fruits, there were blueberries, raspberries, strawberry pulp, cherries, both sweet and sour, peaches, apricots, pears, plums and apples. Almost all were imported from Hungary, Bulgaria, or Roumania.

There were also many kinds of frozen meat dishes – beef, pork and veal in various forms.

I should mention here that the frozen fruit and vegetable assortment is in sharp contrast to the relatively limited variety of fresh fruits and vegetables available in winter. The only ones generally to be found are carrots, Brussels sprouts, parsley, onions and several kinds of cabbage. As for fresh fruits, I found apples and imported tangerines, oranges and lemons. But in past years, wherever oranges were on sale there was always a long queue of people. For the first time I can recall this is no longer true here in East Berlin. There is evidently a large enough supply at present prices just now.

Other imports at the fruit stand include Italian hazel nuts, little packages of dried bananas from Viet Nam, walnuts, peanuts, dates from Iraq, prunes and raisins.

I next examined the fish department. The fresh fish offered was perhaps less varied than usual – only pike, herring and mackerel. All were obviously selling very well. As for the tinned fish, I noticed once more what has been very apparent all winter; the herring catch of the GDR was as good as the Bulgarian tomato crop this year. All shapes and shades of tins turned out to be herring in cream, in tomato sauce, in oil, in wine sauce, in beer sauce, in lemon-egg cream sauce, in smoked bacon gravy, etc. But always herring. Two exceptions are tins of imported Soviet sheat-fish and delicious sockeye salmon.

There are also kippered herrings in glasses and, finally, anchovy paste.

Another section of the store is devoted to meats. A good assortment of beef, pork and mutton is available. There are also wild rabbits and lots of poultry – fat ducks, geese, and turkeys but very scrawny little chickens. As ever, certain cuts are missing; liver, for example. Most people in the GDR are slowly coming to believe that the cattle and other animals here are born without livers. As far as I have been able to discover, most liver disappears into liver sausage. There is always plenty of meat on sale, though there are still sometimes difficulties with beef and veal.

In general, shortages are disappearing, but the remaining ones can sometimes be very maddening. Recently there was almost no cheese in Berlin for some days, and the variety of cheeses available often leaves much to be desired. The people who like shrimp, or eel, or asparagus, or grapefruit are seldom satisfied.

I have already mentioned some shortages which have been overcome. Another is spices. The stand for spices included everything I could think of; ginger, cloves, thyme, pimiento, nutmeg, cinnamon, bay leaves, coriander, and quite a few others; including something exotic called "ysop". My dictionary tells me this

is "hyssop" in English; I find it in the Bible, but not in any of my cookery books.

There were stands filled with all kinds of bread (rye is still the main favourite here), with rice, noodles, macaroni, spaghetti, four sorts of margarine, three sizes of eggs, cakes, cookies and sweets in wide assortment, chocolates, jams and honey.

Then there are the beverages: tea from China, India and Soviet Georgia, cocoa and coffee, of the bean and the instant variety, also milk, fresh, evaporated and condensed and finally, of course, the inevitable tins of Bulgarian tomato juice.

In addition there is a stand for eating Bockwurst sausages, a flower shop, a milk bar and a vegetarian cafeteria.

I have omitted some sections of the store, naturally. But I should not omit the most important — the cashier's tables. This brings us to the question; how much does food cost in the GDR? It is very difficult to make any kind of valid comparison with pound or dollar prices because all prices and wages would have to go into such a comparison. But if a housewife in the GDR is asked about prices, she would probably complain first about prices for meat, especially beef, about butter, coffee and most imported fruits. The items which are very inexpensive are potatoes, bread and rolls, most fresh vegetables (especially in season), flour, oatmeal, and most other staples (and also the Bulgarian tomato juice).

Shopping in the GDR is still something of an adventure. Every once in a while some interesting new item appears. At first only the more curious souls buy it, then the word spreads around that it is delicious, and before you know it there is none left. This process can last as long as a year or as short as an hour. Sometimes it soon appears again, but in the case of the wonderful Soviet crab meat, the Chinese loquat fruits and the tins of Bulgarian egg plant, for example, we are still waiting and hoping.

Despite occasional reports in western papers, there is always enough food in the GDR, despite ups and downs in the assortment and occasional bottlenecks. And the terrible meaning of the word "hunger" has been completely forgotten since the first post-war years. On the other hand when you emerge from a shop here it is the same as in all other countries; you ask yourself, "Now where did all my money disappear to?"

BRITISH INDUSTRY PROMINENT AT LEIPZIG FAIR

Nine thousand firms from 51 countries have leased space already at this spring's Leipzig Trade Fair, it was announced by fair authorities. In terms of display area, West Germany and Britain will lead all western countries represented in the trading city between March 5th and 14th.

For the first time, American steel and chemical companies will also be represented this year; up till now the U. S. A. had sent only tiny book exhibits and the like to Leipzig.

Indonesia, Cuba and the Ivory Coast will also organise their first officially-sponsored collective displays this year. Many countries will substantially increase the number and size of their exhibits — they include Italy, India, Sweden, the Netherlands and France.

The fair, most important meeting-place in the world for East-West trade, offers businessmen a chance to compare production in their own branch with that of a large number of other countries, socialist and capitalist, to pick out commodities they wish to import or to speak with traders and try to sell their own products. They also have the chance to make important contacts which can later be turned into trade deals.

Last autumn West Germany had attempted to disrupt the Leipzig Fair by putting pressure on businessmen to cancel participation; this was part of its threatened embargo of trade with the GDR. But two-thirds of the West Berlin and West German firms concerned resisted all pressure and kept their leases on space in the fair buildings or on the fair grounds. Now that West Germany has dropped its embargo plans and renewed regular trade, many of the firms which did succumb to pressure have rushed to apply again for space.

Much of this valuable display space was already rented to foreign exhibitors in the meantime. In order to accomodate the late-comers, a number of GDR firms will cut down on their space, although they have always relied on the Leipzig Fair as a major opportunity to show their wares to the world and win export contracts. Nevertheless, GDR trade circles are planning to do business with western countries amounting to 900,000,000 marks (about £75,000,000). They will exhibit a large number of new developments and inventions from a score of industries.

Among the best-known British companies to exhibit this year in Leipzig are the Steel Co. of Wales, Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds, ICI, Pye TV, Rootes and Massey-Ferguson.

Ulbricht Greets Kennedy

Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the German Democratic Republic, sent the following telegram to John F. Kennedy on his inauguration as President of the United States of America:

"I send you my best wishes on the occasion of your inauguration, and express the hope that your actions in office may make a contribution to the relaxation of tension in the international situation and to the peaceful solution of unsettled international questions.

"Allow me to extend you, in the exercise of your office in this sense, success for the well-being of the people of the United States of America."

"Neues Deutschland", central organ of the Socialist Unity Party of the GDR, printed the full text of the inaugural speech delivered by John F. Kennedy. In an editorial note the newspaper stated that it was taking this step because "the restrained and moderate tone of the speech was a pleasant contrast to the aggressive phrases calling for a sharpening of the cold war used at the same time by West German War Minister Strauss during his visit to the United States. We also print the full text because West Berlin newspapers and radio stations have given a false impression of the speech by means of arbitrary and one-sided quotations."

GDR Citizens Jailed in West Germany

West German police arrested 224 citizens of the GDR during visits to West Germany in the period from January 1st 1960 to the present. 65 of these were sentenced to an average of more than 5½ months prison. Most of the others were forced to spend many months in jail awaiting investigation. Many are still in prison.

Of those imprisoned, many had tried to bring invitations to visit the GDR to colleagues in West German factories, others had only visited relatives.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Letting loose a questionnaire on readers is always an anxious business; how many people are willing to take the time and trouble to sit down and fill out the answers to a lot of questions, then find an envelope and a stamp and send the form in?

After printing our "Do It Yourself" page on January 6th, we sat back to wait. We did not have to wait long, for a Berlin reader came into the office the very day the issue appeared on the news-stalls and sat right down to fill out the form on the spot.

Galluping In

Ever since, the office has been clogged with completed forms, and still they come by every post. So far answers have come in from most European countries, and anytime now forms from other parts of the world should start coming.

Today I can only give you a preliminary report on what our readers say: a full report will have to wait for several weeks more, both to allow time for more answers to come in, and to allow us to collate the replies.

Most of the replies have quite naturally come from Britain, where we have far more readers than in any other country, and perhaps I can sum up the answers from Britain best by presenting you with the picture of what seems to be an average reader of GERMAN REPORT there:

Mr Average Reader is an engineering worker or teacher in the Midlands, and the chances are that he holds a post in his trade union or his local Labour Party, or both. He finds GERMAN REPORT interesting and useful, reads most of the articles, saves some back numbers, and uses the information in arguments. He does not use GERMAN REPORT to wrap fish; quite a number of readers noted that it was really too small for this purpose, and one reader was so incensed by the suggestion that he called us sternly to order for flippancy.

No "Don't-Knows"

Mr Average Reader appears to be fairly satisfied with the proportion of space devoted to events in West Germany, and the proportion given to the GDR; that is to say, about one third of the form-fillers wanted more about West German militarism and nazism, one third wanted more about the GDR, and the other third liked things as they are.

Let us leave Mr Average Reader now, and see what suggestions are made for improving GERMAN REPORT. Obviously we have not been doing all we could to give readers a full picture of life in the GDR, because a very high proportion of form-fillers suggest subjects for articles: the main suggestions are for articles on everyday life, education, women and home, health and welfare, literature and theatres. The suggestions have been noted, and we hope in coming issues to deal with some at least of the questions raised.

On one question there was a high degree of unanimity: about 90% of the form-fillers want more photographs. The customer is, of course, always right, but our difficulty here is that with a small-format eight-page paper photographs take an alarming amount of space if they are any larger than postage stamps. We shall see what can be done about increasing the number of illustrations, but I think the real solution is for people who want more pictures to supplement GERMAN REPORT by subscribing to "GDR Review", published every month in Dresden. You can get a free sample copy and details of how to subscribe by writing to:

GDR Review
Verlag Zeit im Bild
Spenerstrasse 21
Dresden A 19
German Democratic Republic

Pix Nixed

I must say that on the question of more illustrations I tend to side with the minority view expressed by a Newcastle reader, who wrote "No photographs — because I can read".

Completed forms included a number of interesting suggestions. An Irish reader wrote: "Perhaps what is needed is a single magazine summarising every week news from all the Socialist countries, from East Germany to North Vietnam. This would help those who want to have all the news, but cannot find time to read about each country individually." It seems a good suggestion, and I print it here in the hope that it may be possible to pursue it further.

Other readers suggest that GERMAN REPORT should appear weekly, and have more pages. We have kicked this idea around in Berlin several times in the past, but the consensus of opinion among readers with whom we are in regular contact is that more pages or more frequent issues would overload most people with masses of material they would not find time to digest.

One London reader called for "more streamlining of government statements"; other readers wanted the full text of GDR Government statements. We modestly think that we generally managed to streamline official statements and proposals to the fullest degree possible; if we published full texts of important statements we should have no room for anything else at all.

Back to Form

Another suggestion from a London reader will cause some headaches when we start making up the pages: "Don't put things to cut out on the back of articles we want to keep". The difficulty here is that we don't know what you might want to keep. Probably the best solution, if you file the paper and don't want to cut your copies, is to write us a letter instead of clipping the coupon; however, we are always glad to send you, free, another copy to replace one mislaid or mutilated. (Helga Preuss, our stalwart secretary, who has to comply with such requests, and who is already snowed-under with the job of analysing the completed "Do It Yourself" forms, will curse gently, but will see to it that you get your replacement copies.)

And here in conclusion are a few odds-and-ends which caught my eye while sifting through the forms so far received: the form-fillers include one archbishop, five other clerics (assorted), three company directors, and one man who gives his occupation as "revisionist"; one reader wanted more news about the church, remarking "More religion, as I am an atheist"; and another made the slightly obscure remark: "I am a vegetarian, but interested in Berlin Notebook".

Tiny Fish

Anyway, the more filled-in forms the merrier: if you have not used the issue of January 6th to wrap very tiny fish, perhaps you can fill it in now; and if you can't find the form, just write and tell us what you like and dislike about the paper, and what we could do to improve it.

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